Diwan Bahadur Dr. V. Verghese.—Yes.

Mr. N. Padmanabha Menon.—Is the new incumbent a qualified doctor in the Ophthalmic line ?

Diwan Bahadur Dr. V. Verghese —He is as qualified as any you can get.

Mr. N. Padmanabha Menon.—May I know the reason for the appointment being made on the 30th of March 1925, i. e., 10 months before the apparatus was ordered for ?

Diwan Bahadur Dr. V. Verghese.—The answer is given there.

Mr. N. Padmanabha Menon.—I want the reason why the appointment was made, before the order for the apparatus was given.

Diwan Bahadur Dr. V. Verghese.—He was appointed both for the combined work of the Ophthalmic Hospital which was in existence and the X-Ray Department which was to be in existence. Further, the advice of an expert was essentially necessary to get down all the necessary instruments, appliances and all that. That is the reason.

The Excise Committee.

309. Mr. K. T. Mathew.—Will the Government be pleased to state.—

(a) the number of meetings of the Excise Committee held in the first nine months after the appointment of the Committee;

(b) whether the Committee at its first meeting had not decided that the next meeting should be held in last Kanni, and whether there was any meeting in Kanni as decided upon, and to mention the reason for not holding a meeting in that month, if there was no meeting;

(c) whether any letter was received by the convener of the Committee from any of the members of the Committee for holding a meeting before the last budget session of the Council to consider any definite matter, and if so, whether the letter be placed on the table, and state whether the convener convened a meeting as requested, replied the letter or acknowledged the receipt of it;

(d) whether any member of the Committee wrote to the Government about the irregular way in which the work of the Committee has been done and recording his disapprobation, and if so, whether copies of such letter be printed and placed on the table;

(e) whether any action has been taken by the Government or the Chairman of the Committee with reference to the letters mentioned in (d);

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(f) and if so, whether the replies sent by the Government and the Chairman be placed on the table?

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—(a) One.

(b) The answer to the first part of the question is in the affirmative, and that to the second part in the negative. No meeting could be held as decided upon, because the memorandum, which the convener was asked to prepare, could be completed only in the beginning of Kanni last, and there was no time to circulate copies of it, and the report and books mentioned in the resolution passed at the first meeting amongst the members before the date of the proposed meeting.

(c) Yes.

The letter is placed on the Secretary's table.

No meeting was convened by the convener, as all the other members of the Committee were not in favour of convening such a meeting.

Neither was a reply sent to the letter nor its receipt acknowledged, as there was no necessity to do so, on account of the majority of the members being against the convening of such a meeting.

(d) to (f). The Government received a communication from Mr. K. T. Mathew, M. L. C. This was forwarded to the Chairman of the Committee for consideration and disposal, and the member informed of the fact. What further action was taken by the Chairman on the communication must be known to the member, since he is a member of the Excise Committee also. As such, the Government do not think it necessary to call for the papers to be placed on the table.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—Were the members of the Committee given information that no meeting will be held?

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—They were not given information in writing.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—Were they all given verbal information?.

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—Not all; some of them.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.— Do they not require the same kind of treatment from the Government?

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—It is a matter of opinion.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—As a member of the Excise Committee, Sir, if the same treatment is not accorded to me, I tender my resignation in this Council.

President.—Such a statement should not be made in this House. I object to your statement that you are tendering your resignation.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—Even the courtesy of acknowledging a letter was not extended to the members of the Committee appointed

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by the Government. Neither was a reply sent nor its receipt acknowledged.

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—The reason is given there.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—Did the majority of the members say that an acknowledgment should not be sent?

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—No.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—Why was not an acknowledgment sent?

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—It was not usual to send acknowledgments to every letter received. I was thinking as to what should be done with it.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—Had the Government other Excise Committees before to establish that acknowledgments should not be sent?

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar—I was referring to what was prevailing in my office.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—That is not an answer to the question, Sir. I want to know whether there was any Excise Committee appointed by the Government before.

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—Is it a supplementary question? I think it is not.

President.—What is your supplementary question?

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—If the majority of the members are against it, should it not be made known to the members?

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—I thought it was unnecessary.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—Did you issue a circular to the members to know their opinion?

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—Yes.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.— Was it sent to all the members?

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—Not all.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—Why was a distinction made between one member and another?

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—It is the desire of the member contained in the letter that was circulated among the other members. Therefore, it was not communicated to that member who wanted that a meeting should be held.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—Was the decision of the majority of the members made known to him?

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—No.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—Why?

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—I thought it was unnecessary.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—Have they not a right to know, so long as they are members of the Committee?

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Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—That is a matter of opinion.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—I have not known what decision has been made in this matter. Will it be let known to me what further action was taken by the Chairman? I have not received any communication regarding the matter.

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—I want notice.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—The last sentence of the same question. For the information of the members and the public, will those papers be placed on the table?

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—The answer is already there. I have nothing more to add.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—The answer is not there.

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—The Government do not think it necessary to place the papers on the table.

Mr. T. K. Krishna Menon.—Time, Sir.

The deputation of the people of Kunnamkulam.

310. Mr. K. T. Mathew.—Will the Government be pleased to state.—

(1) whether a deputation of the people of Kunnamkulam and neighbouring villages did not wait upon the Diwan for opening a branch Railway line to Kunnamkulam;

(2) whether the matter has been decided by the Government;

(3) and if not, at what stage it is at present;

(4) and whether the correspondence regarding this matter be placed on the table?

Mr. A. K. Vengu Ayyar.—(1) Yes.

(2) No.

(3) The matter is under enquiry.

(4) Not at this stage.

Details of the Kunnamkulam Town Improvement in the current year.

311. Mr. K. T. Mathew.—Will the Government be pleased to lay on the table a statement containing the items of improvements that will be made this year in Kunnamkulam with the amount of Rs. 2,000 budgetted for the town improvement in the current year?

Diwan Bahadur Dr. V. Verghese.—The statement is on the table. (*Vide Appendix VIII.*)

The invitation of non-officials to Darbar functions.

312. Mr. K. T. Mathew.—With reference to the answer to question No. 155 (c) of the last meeting of the Council, will the Government be pleased to state why the Government

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